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CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method of delayed answering of calls directed to a
5 mobile telephone, comprising:
 - accepting an incoming call from a calling party device;
 - disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup device associated with the mobile telephone during a
10 preset delay period from a time the incoming call is accepted; and
 - transmitting a prerecorded message to the calling party device during the preset delay period.
- 15 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - in response to detection of a voice input, disabling transmission of the prerecorded message; and
 - enabling transmission of input from the voice pickup device.
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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the preset delay period is set as an option in the mobile telephone.
- 25 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the preset delay period is set as an option when a user of the mobile telephone registers with a mobile telephone network.
- 30 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - determining an operating mode of the mobile telephone, wherein disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup device and transmitting a prerecorded message are performed only if the operating mode of the

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mobile telephone is set to an operating mode in which delayed answering is enabled.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein determining the
5 operating mode includes detecting a delayed answer input
from a user of the mobile telephone.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the operating mode of
the mobile telephone is set by way of one or more
10 on-screen menus of the mobile telephone.

8. The method of claim 5, wherein the operating mode of the mobile telephone is set by way of a physical switch associated with the mobile telephone.

15 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
determining an identity of the calling party device;
comparing the identity of the calling party device
to a list of calling party devices; and
20 determining if delayed answering should be used to
answer the call based on the comparison, wherein
disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup
device and transmitting a prerecorded message to the
calling party device are performed if delayed answering
25 should be used.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
retrieving a schedule of events from a memory
associated with the mobile telephone;
30 determining if an event in the schedule of events is
scheduled for a present time; and

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determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used, wherein disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup device and transmitting a prerecorded message to the calling party
5 device are performed if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be
10 used includes at least one of retrieving an identifier indicating whether delayed answering is to be used and retrieving an identifier of an operational mode of the mobile telephone associated with the event.

15 12. The method of claim 10, wherein determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used includes:

performing term identification on a description of the event; and

20 determining if one or more terms in the description of the event are associated with an operational mode of the mobile telephone in which delayed answering is enabled.

25 13. An apparatus for delayed answering of calls directed to a mobile telephone, comprising:

means for accepting an incoming call from a calling party device;

30 means for disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup device associated with the mobile telephone during a preset delay period from a time the incoming call is accepted; and

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means for transmitting a prerecorded message to the calling party device during the preset delay period.

14. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:
5 means for disabling transmission of the prerecorded message in response to detection of a voice input; and
means for enabling transmission of input from the voice pickup device.
- 10 15. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the preset delay period is set as an option in the mobile telephone.
- 15 16. The apparatus of claim 13, wherein the preset delay period is set as an option when a user of the mobile telephone registers with a mobile telephone network.
17. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:
means for determining an operating mode of the mobile telephone, wherein the means for disabling
20 transmission of input from a voice pickup device and the means for transmitting a prerecorded message operate only if the operating mode of the mobile telephone is set to an operating mode in which delayed answering is enabled.
- 25 18. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the means for determining the operating mode includes means for detecting a delayed answer input from a user of the mobile telephone.
- 30 19. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the operating mode of the mobile telephone is set by way of one or more on-screen menus of the mobile telephone.

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20. The apparatus of claim 17, wherein the operating mode of the mobile telephone is set by way of a physical switch associated with the mobile telephone.

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21. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

means for determining an identity of the calling party device;

means for comparing the identity of the calling party device to a list of calling party devices; and
means for determining if delayed answering should be used to answer the call based on the comparison, wherein the means for disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup device and means for transmitting a prerecorded message to the calling party device operate if delayed answering should be used.

22. The apparatus of claim 13, further comprising:

means for retrieving a schedule of events from a memory associated with the mobile telephone;
means for determining if an event in the schedule of events is scheduled for a present time; and
means for determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used, wherein the means for disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup device and means for transmitting a prerecorded message to the calling party device operate if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used.

30 23. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the means for determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used includes at least one of means

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for retrieving an identifier indicating whether delayed answering is to be used and means for retrieving an identifier of an operational mode of the mobile telephone associated with the event.

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24. The apparatus of claim 22, wherein the means for determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used includes:

means for performing term identification on a
10 description of the event; and

means for determining if one or more terms in the description of the event are associated with an operational mode of the mobile telephone in which delayed answering is enabled.

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25. A computer program product in a computer readable medium for delayed answering of calls directed to a mobile telephone, comprising:

first instructions for accepting an incoming call
20 from a calling party device;

second instructions for disabling transmission of input from a voice pickup device associated with the mobile telephone during a preset delay period from a time the incoming call is accepted; and

25 third instructions for transmitting a prerecorded message to the calling party device during the preset delay period.

26. The computer program product of claim 25, further
30 comprising:

fourth instructions for disabling transmission of

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the prerecorded message in response to detection of a voice input; and

fifth instructions for enabling transmission of input from the voice pickup device.

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27. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the preset delay period is set as an option in the mobile telephone.

10 28. The computer program product of claim 25, wherein the preset delay period is set as an option when a user of the mobile telephone registers with a mobile telephone network.

15 29. The computer program product of claim 25, further comprising:

fourth instructions for determining an operating mode of the mobile telephone, wherein the second instructions for disabling transmission of input from a 20 voice pickup device and the third instructions for transmitting a prerecorded message are executed only if the operating mode of the mobile telephone is set to an operating mode in which delayed answering is enabled.

25 30. The computer program product of claim 29, wherein the fourth instructions for determining the operating mode include instructions for detecting a delayed answer input from a user of the mobile telephone.

30 31. The computer program product of claim 29, wherein the operating mode of the mobile telephone is set by way of one or more on-screen menus of the mobile telephone.

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32. The computer program product of claim 29, wherein
the operating mode of the mobile telephone is set by way
of a physical switch associated with the mobile
5 telephone.

33. The computer program product of claim 25, further
comprising:

fourth instructions for determining an identity of
10 the calling party device;
fifth instructions for comparing the identity of the
calling party device to a list of calling party devices;
and
sixth instructions for determining if delayed
15 answering should be used to answer the call based on the
comparison, wherein the second instructions for disabling
transmission of input from a voice pickup device and
third instructions for transmitting a prerecorded message
to the calling party device are executed if delayed
20 answering should be used.

34. The computer program product of claim 25, further
comprising:

fourth instructions for retrieving a schedule of
25 events from a memory associated with the mobile
telephone;

fifth instructions for determining if an event in
the schedule of events is scheduled for a present time;
and

30 sixth instructions for determining if the event is
an event for which delayed answering is to be used,
wherein the second instructions for disabling

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transmission of input from a voice pickup device and third instructions for transmitting a prerecorded message to the calling party device are executed if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used.

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35. The computer program product of claim 34, wherein the sixth instructions for determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used include at least one of instructions for retrieving an identifier 10 indicating whether delayed answering is to be used and instructions for retrieving an identifier of an operational mode of the mobile telephone associated with the event.
- 15 36. The computer program product of claim 34, wherein the sixth instructions for determining if the event is an event for which delayed answering is to be used include:
instructions for performing term identification on a description of the event; and
20 instructions for determining if one or more terms in the description of the event are associated with an operational mode of the mobile telephone in which delayed answering is enabled.

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